

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-29 (canceled)

Claim 30 (currently amended): The process of claim 33 ~~29~~, wherein the atmosphere of step a) comprises a gas selected from the group consisting of He, Ar, N₂, O₂, H₂, CO, CO₂, NO₂, NH₃, H₂S and mixtures thereof.

Claim 31 (canceled):

Claim 32 (currently amended): A process for mechanosynthesizing a metal oxide having a perovskite or perovskite-like crystal structure, and a stoichiometric content of oxygen, and a high BET specific surface area, said metal oxide being selected from the group consisting of perovskites of the general formula ABO₃; perovskite-like materials of the general formula [(ABO₃)_n + C_yO_z]; non-stoichiometric compounds derived from perovskite and having the general formula (ABO_{3-x}); and non-stoichiometric compounds derived from perovskite-like materials and having the general formula [(ABO_{3-x})_n + C_yO_z], wherein:

- A comprises at least one element selected from the group consisting of Al, Y, Na, K, Rb, Cs, Pb, La, Sr, Ba, Cr, Ag, Ca, Pr, Nd, Bi and the elements of the lanthanide series of the periodic table;

- B comprises at least one element selected from the group consisting of Al, Ga, In, Zr, Nb, Sn, Ru, Rh, Pd, Re, Os, Ir, Pt, U, Co, Fe, Ni, Mn, Cr, Ti, Cu, Mg, V, Nb, Ta, Mo and W;
- C represents at least one element selected from the group consisting of Ga, In, Zr, Nb, Sn, Ru, Rh, Pd, Re, Os, Ir, Pt, U, Co, Fe, Ni, Mn, Cr, Ti, Cu, Mg, V, Nb, Ta, Mo, W, Al, Y, Na, K, Rb, Cs, Pb, La, Sr, Ba, Cr, Ag, Ca, Pr, Nd, Bi and the elements of the lanthanide series of the periodic table;
- n represents an integer number between 1 and 10;
- $0 < x < 3$
- y represents an integer number between 1 and 5;
- z represents an integer number between 1 and 5;

said process consisting essentially of the steps of:

a) subjecting a mixture of starting powders, which are in the form of oxides, hydroxides, carbonates, nitrates, or oxalates, ~~or chlorides~~, and are formulated to contain the components represented by A, B and C in the formulas to a high energy milling sufficient to induce chemical reaction of the components and thereby directly mechanosynthesize said metal oxide in the form of a perovskite or a perovskite-like material having a nanocrystalline structure as determined by X-ray diffractometry;

b) increasing the BET specific surface area of the metal oxide obtained in step a) by further subjecting said metal oxide to high energy milling under a humidified atmosphere to obtain a metal oxide having a high BET specific surface area.

Claim 33 (original): The process of claim 32, wherein the high energy milling of step a) is performed under a controlled atmosphere to control the nanocrystalline structure and the stoichiometric oxygen content of the mechanosynthesized metal oxide.

Claim 34 (original): The process of claim 32, further comprising the step of adding a small amount of an aqueous solution to the metal oxide during the milling of step b) in order to obtain a humidified metal oxide.

Claim 35 (original): The process of claim 32, wherein the high energy milling of step b) is performed under a controlled atmosphere to control the BET specific surface area of the mechanosynthesized metal oxide.

Claim 36 (currently amended): The process of claim 35 32, wherein the atmosphere of step b) comprises a gas selected from the group consisting of H₂O, He, Ar, N₂, O₂, H₂, CO, CO₂, NO₂, NH₃, H₂S and mixtures thereof.

Claim 37 (original): The process of claim 32, further comprising the step of selecting and milling the starting powders in relative portions to control the final nanocrystalline structure of the mechanosynthesized metal oxide.

Claim 38 (original) The process of claim 32, further comprising the steps of:

- a) adding a non-reacting soluble additive during the milling of step b); and
- d) subsequently washing out said soluble additive.

Claim 39 (currently amended): The process of claim 38, wherein the non-reacting soluble additive is selected from the group consisting of LiCl, NaCl, RbCl, C₃Cl, NH₄Cl, ZnO, ~~NaNO₃~~ and mixtures thereof.

Claim 40-50 (canceled)

Claim 51 (currently amended): A process for mechanosynthesizing a metal oxide having a perovskite or perovskite-like crystal structure, and a stoichiometric content of oxygen, and a high BET specific surface area, said metal oxide being selected from the group consisting of perovskites of the general formula ABO₃; perovskite-like materials of the general formula [(ABO₃)_n + C_yO_z]; non-stoichiometric compounds derived from perovskite and having the general formula (ABO_{3-x}); and non-stoichiometric compounds derived from perovskite-like materials and having the general formula [(ABO_{3-x})_n + C_yO_z], wherein:

- A comprises at least one element selected from the group consisting of Al, Y, Na, K, Rb, Cs, Pb, La, Sr, Ba, Cr, Ag, Ca, Pr, Nd, Bi and the elements of the lanthanide series of the periodic table;

- B comprises at least one element selected from the group consisting of Al, Ga, In, Zr, Nb, Sn, Ru, Rh, Pd, Re, Os, Ir, Pt, U, Co, Fe, Ni, Mn, Cr, Ti, Cu, Mg, V, Nb, Ta, Mo and W;
- C represents at least one element selected from the group consisting of Ga, In, Zr, Nb, Sn, Ru, Rh, Pd, Re, Os, Ir, Pt, U, Co, Fe, Ni, Mn, Cr, Ti, Cu, Mg, V, Nb, Ta, Mo, W, Al, Y, Na, K, Rb, Cs, Pb, La, Sr, Ba, Cr, Ag, Ca, Pr, Nd, Bi and the elements of the lanthanide series of the periodic table;
- n represents an integer number between 1 and 10;
- $0 < x < 3$
- y represents an integer number between 1 and 5;
- z represents an integer number between 1 and 5;

said process comprising:

a) the single step of subjecting a mixture of starting powders, which are in the form of oxides, hydroxides, carbonates, nitrates, or oxalates, ~~or chlorides~~, and are formulated to contain the components represented by A, B and C in the formulas to a high energy milling sufficient to induce chemical reaction of the components and thereby directly mechanosynthesize said metal oxide in the form of a perovskite or a perovskite-like material having a nanocrystalline structure as determined by X-ray diffractometry; and

b) increasing the BET specific surface area of the metal oxide obtained in step a) by further subjecting said metal oxide to high energy milling under a humidified atmosphere to obtain a metal oxide having a high BET specific surface area.